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ABSTRACT

A visit was made to Dacca University to survey the acquisition of Soviet Union and United States monographs and journals. The project was undertaken to ascertain the influence of the USSR on the intellectuals of Bangladesh in comparison to that of the United States. It was discovered that, since 1972, the USSR has supplied very few publications to the library. Instead, most of the books and periodicals being sent to the university have come from a $6.5 million agreement with Franklin Book Programs, Inc., in the United States, for technical assistance and advisory services in purchasing books and related education materials, and donations from British Universities, UNROD through the British Council, and International Education Book Exhibits. The library is still struggling with severe shortages of space, staff, books, foreign exchange, and money. To help alleviate these problems, it was recommended that: (1) a long range systemized gift agreement be established for the supply of books and periodicals in every field; (2) funds be appropriated for the construction of a new library building; and (3) an arrangement be developed with U.S. library schools and the American Library Association to provide education and training for Bangladesh librarians. A synopsis of recent political events in Bangladesh and lists of members of the Dacca Library Committee, U.S. libraries that participated in the former P.L. 480 program, and the principal donors of books to the library from 1971-1974 are included. (JPF)

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COMPARISON OF DACCA UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH, PROCUREMENT POLICY OF THE SOVIET UNION AND UNITED STATES PUBLICATIONS

by

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COMPARISON OF DACCA UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH,
PROCUREMENT POLICY OF THE SOVIET UNION AND UNITED STATES PUBLICATIONS

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In order to discover influence of Russian viewpoints versus that of United States on the young students and intellectuals of Bangladesh, I undertook a trip to that country to analyze the acquisition of Soviet Union and United States monographs and journals by Dacca University Library. Although, the history is not the subject matter of this paper yet the author hopes that a synopsis of current events of that country would enable the readers to understand the problems of Dacca University Library quicker and better than otherwise.

In August 1947, when the British left, the Indian subcontinent was partitioned roughly on a religious basis into two sovereign nations, India and Pakistan. India was able to maintain a geographical unity. Pakistan was divided into two wings, the East and the West, separated by a distance of 1,200 miles of Indian territory.

Bangladesh formerly East Pakistan declared its independence from Pakistan in 1971. Although "Bangladesh" means Bengal Nation, the state includes only the eastern part of the territory inhabited by the Bengali people. The Bengalis in the East had more in common with fellow Bengalis in India, who shared their language and cultural heritage, than with West Pakistanis, whose historical experience was different and whose national lauguage was Urdu. Bengali became an official language of Pakistan only in 1954. From the beginning the eastern wing remained distinctly apart from the western. The political and administrative leadership was centered in the West. The East, supplier of foreign exchange crops viz jute

and tea, was turned into a market for the manufactured goods of the West. By the 1970's, although the East accounted for 50 % of national export earnings, it received only 30 % of national budgetary funds. A feeling had grown among Bengalis that the West-dominated central government regarded the East as a colony. The separatist sentiment of Bengalis was intensified when the government failed to provide prompt relief for victims of a tropical storm that devastated part of East Pakistan in November, 1970, causing hundreds of thousands of deaths.

The General Elections were held on December 7, 1970, in which the people of East Pakistan gave a clear mandate to the Awami League, the champion of full regional autonomy for that part of Pakistan. Instead of respecting the will of the people, the Government of Pakistan chose to flout the endorsement of the majority. A brutal repression, beginning on March 25, 1971, was met by resistance, and though Sheikh Mujib was arrested, his supporters proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh, the next day. In the coming months, guerrillas fought on with Indian aid. Bangladesh became independent in December 1971, two weeks after the outbreak of war between India and Pakistan. East Pakistan was overrun by Indian and guerrilla forces, and the rebel government was installed at Dacca, the capital. The leaders of the new nation—officially the People's Republic of Bangladesh—declared that it would be a parliamentary democracy with socialist aims. In January 1972, Mujib was released from detention in West Pakistan and returned to Dacca, resuming active leadership as Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

Sheik Mujibur Rahman's regime was bogged down in nepotism and corruption, the public's enchantment with him waned, and he was finally killed in a coup d' etat. Khondakar M. Ahmed, who had been one of Sheik Mujib's confreres in the long and bloody struggle for independence from

Pakistan, then became President. But now he, too, is gone and Major General Ziaur Rahman has moved suddenly to the fore. Bangladesh is the eighth most populous country in the world, is in a state of crippled economy and requires massive foreign assistance over a long period to develop as a self-reliant nation.

I visited Dacca University to survey the procurement of Russian and United States publications by its library. The specific objectives of the survey were these:

1. To establish the number of publications acquired in the following categories:
    a. Reference books, bibliographies and related material
    b. Newspapers
    c. Periodicals
    d. Language and literature
    e. History
    f. Social sciences
    g. Sciences
    h. Technology
2. To establish the fields in which the soviet publications are acquired more than the United States publications.
3. To enquire whether the Dacca University Librarians are being trained in Russia or Russian Librarians are visiting Dacca.
4. To enquire whether there is any arrangement for translation of Russian publications in the Bengali Language.

This project was undertaken in order to establish the influence of Russians on the intellectuals of Bangladesh in comparison to the United States.

Dacca University Library's total stock of books, including volumes of periodicals, in the year of 1974 was approximately 318,942. Total

number of manuscripts was about 20,000, including 420 bound and 19,580 unbound manuscripts. The working of the library was hampered because of the staff. The library had the positions as mentioned below:

1.	Librarian	One (Vacant)
2.	Deputy Librarians	Two (One vacant)
3.	Assistant Librarians	Four
4.	Reproduction Officer	One
5.	Keeper	One

Further, the library was administrated by the Library Committee and was constituted of the following members:

1. The Vice-Chancellor, Ex-Officio Chairman
2. The Dean of the Faculty of the Arts, Ex-Officio-member
3. The Dean of the Faculty of Law, Ex-Officio-member
4. The Dean of the Faculty of Social sciences, Ex-Officio-member
5. The Dean of the Faculty of Commerce, Ex-Officio-member
6. The Dean of the Faculty of Science, Ex-Officio-member
7. Dr. A.B.M. Habibullah, Library Adviser
8. The Chairman, Dept. of International Relations, member
9. Dr. S.Z. Haider, Prof. of Chemistry, member
10. Dr. Md. Habibullah, Prof. of Accounting, member
11. The Librarian, Member and Secretary

Unfortunately, the Committee had only two meetings in the year 1973 (November 13, 1973) and 1974 (April 22, 1974)

In the academic session 1973-74, the University budget provided a sum of Tk.* 9,667,771 for library expenditure. The breakdown of expenditure of this sum under the different heads was as follows:

* Taka is Bangladesh currency unit. About TK 8.50 = one dollar.

		Budget	Expenditure	Balance
1. Establishment	Tk.	448,777.00	448,777.00	Nil
2. Books and Journals		470,000.00	360,943.80	74,466.11*
3. Equipment and Furniture			34,590.99	Nil
4. Bindery		8,000.00	8,000.00	Nil
5. Contingent and Miscellaneous		40,000.00	40,000.00	Nil

Previously, as a part of Pakistan, Bangladesh participated in the P.L. 480 Program. The Library of Congress had a center in Dacca called "American Libraries Book Procurement Center, Dacca". The books, periodicals, and other materials received were deposited in the following libraries and research centers in the United States:

1. Library of Congress
2. University of California Library, Berkeley
3. University of Chicago Library
4. Columbia University Library
5. Cornell University Library
6. Duke University Library
7. University of Hawaii Library
8. University of Illinois Library
9. University of Michigan Library
10. University of Minnesota Library
11. University of Texas Library
12. University of Pennsylvania Library
13. University of Virginia Library
14. University of Wisconsin Library
15. University of Washington Library
16. University of Kentucky Library
17. University of Southern California Library
18. New York Public Library
19. Syracuse University Library
20. Boston College Library
21. Brandeis University Library
22. Princeton University Library

The Library of Congress published a list entitled "Accession list-Pakistan". The project was a tremendous success. A Pakistani author and publisher wrote "We cannot help expressing our surprise-and pleasure, too- at the wide range of the selection of Pakistani publications both in the state and regional languages. This ... accession list gives the lie to the anti-U.S. propaganda that the Americans are only money minded". Mr. Adil Usmani in his Status of Bibliography in Pakistan, 1968, summarized the usefulness of the list to bibliographers as follows: "The selection of materials is quite comprehensive and includes publications of the languages originating from Pakistan... In the absence of a current

* Could not be utilized inspite of the best attempts for want of foreign exchange

national bibliography of Pakistan, this is the best source at present for Pakistani publications".

The Bangladesh Government refused to honor the agreement between Pakistan and the United States for the supply of books under the PL-480 Program and all the shipments of books from Bangladesh to the United States were suspended in 1971. The Library of Congress officials had a series of talks with their counterparts in Bangladesh to resume the shipment of publications on a bilateral basis. On March 8, 1972, Mr. Frank M. McGowan, Chief, Overseas Operations Division, Library of Congress, sent a letter to the participants in PL-480 Program regarding acquisition of Publications from Bangladesh, providing adequate U.S. dollar support by participants. This contribution by the participating libraries does not include the substantial costs to be absorbed by LC through the PL-480 office in New Delhi, including shipment of publications. The annual contribution for administration has been set at $950. The cost of a set of publications is estimated at $350. Institutions participating will be asked to contribute one half of the annual total to cover the cost of publications and administration.

Mr. McGowan reported to more than 70 persons who attended a Public Law 480 meeting held on January 29, 1973, that various government restrictions and requirements had impeded the forwarding of books and serials through Calcutta, and thence to New Delhi, for cataloging and ultimate transshipment to participants. The level of current published output is low but the Dacca office is achieving good coverage of what there is.

The Government of Bangladesh recently signed a $6.5 million agreement with Franklin Book Programs, Inc., New York, for technical assistance and advisory services in purchasing books and related educational

materials. This $6.5 million is part of a $115 million U.S. AID grant to the war-torn nation of 75 million people, for relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. The agreement was signed by A.S. Noor Mohammed, Bangladesh's Secretary of Education, and John H. Kyle, President of Franklin Book Programs, Inc.

The money will be spent as follows: $6.2 million will be used for the cost of production in Bangladesh of primary and secondary textbooks written in Bengali. The remaining grant will be available for the importation and organization by Bangladesh of American university level textbooks in English, and training of personnel. These books will be distributed to six Bangladesh universities to replace those lost in the recent war of independence with West Pakistan.

Franklin Book Programs is a nonprofit, educational corporation, which has, through its Dacca office, played an active role in Library and book publishing development for 18 years in the area that is now Bangladesh.

On the other hand, there was no arrangement of any kind with USSR for the supply of their publications to Dacca University. We can conclude from the following figures, except for negligible gifts from Russia, that they are not helping the Dacca University in any other way. The figures below are shown by the year, donors and number of books received on gifts from various sources:

1971-72

Principal Donors	No. of books received
1. Consulate General of Republic of Germany	16
2. Library of Congress	16
3. University of Burmingham	24
4. USSR	1262

5.	Oxford University Press	458
6.	International Education Book Exhibits	1000
7.	Agency for International Development	150
8.	Miscellaneous	97
9.	Bangladesh High Commission in Calcutta	114
	Total	3137

1972-73

1.	UNROD: through British Council	3180
2.	Oxford University Press	490
3.	British Universities	6000
4.	U.S. Aid through Franklin Book Programs	463
5.	Agency for International aid	150
6.	Scranton University, U.S.A.	175
7.	New Zealand Government	71
8.	Switzerland Government	41
9.	Bangladesh Government	24
10.	Miscellaneous sources	237
	Total	10831

1973-74

1.	Bangladesh Government	10
2.	Scranton University, U.S.A.	165
3.	Franklin Book Programs	9475
4.	British Council, Dacca	22
5.	Ranfurby Library Service, London	22
6.	Miscellaneous sources	273
	Total	9967

Besides the above, 52 titles of Foreign Journals were subscribed through the courtesy of Franklin Book Programs and British Council.

Bangladesh is a poor country. The economy has been stagnant for sometime and the foreign exchange balance is such that buying from abroad is extremely difficult. On August 15, 1975, Assistant Secretary of State Sissco said in an interview over CBS about Bangladesh that it is one country in the world that depends upon foreign resources entirely which is monumental economic problem ... The Dacca University Library has inadequate resources, and further, whatever they have, they are ineffectively utilized. The current inflationary rates have made the economy of the country stagnant for some time. The Dacca University library is struggling with severe shortages of space, staff, books, foreign exchange and money. Higher education is passing through a long depressed period. The view of faculty and administrators about the quality of education is one of pessimism in the absence of a well equipped library in regards to books and journals.

We can conclude that the Dacca University Library needs help and can be salvaged by the following methods:

1. There should be long range systemized gift arrangement for the supply of books and periodicals in every field. The 22 libraries and research centers in the United States which were participating in the PL-480 Program could formulate a scheme to send some books or periodicals to that library. Even, some duplicates in those libraries or superseded series of Serials could be supplied to them. They are hardly in a position to buy the latest scientific and other material from other countries. They do not publish any scientific monographs or serials of any significant value which can be used in higher education. During the year 1973-74, no foreign exchange was allocated to the library to import books and Journals. 3,211 volumes were purchased from book-sellers, and 396 books were imported. Also 412 titles of foreign Journals subscribed out of the unspent balance of foreign exchange received in the previous year of 1972-73. Moreover, the library lost a large number of volumes, particularly during the year of liberation in 1971 and subsequently.

2. The Library is functioning with great hardship in its congested building. The acute shortage of space has created problems for accomodation of books, and administrative staff. The present manuscript section is not suitable for maintenance and preservation of manuscripts and service. Particularly, the science section of the library, with a separate building, is facing an acute space problem. Definitely, the university needs funds for the construction of a new and functional library building.

3. The posts of the Librarian and a Deputy Librarian are vacant. Prof. Habibullah of the Sociology Department is an adviser to the library. It is apparent that Bangladesh needs more trained librarians. There should be an arrangement developed through the leading Library schools of this country and the American Library Association to provide the necessary educational training to the Librarians of Bangladesh to enable them to fill the vacuum in the librarianship of that country.

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